

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 1258

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI AO

SUBJECT: MATEUS NETO CASE

1. THE LUANDA PRESS OF AUGUST 25 CARRIED THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT MADE TO THE OFFICIAL RADIO STATION ON AUGUST 23 BY FNLA MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE MATEUS NETO. NETO LEFT ON AUGUST 25 FOR EUROPE, PROBABLY TO AUSTRIA, WHERE HIS FAMILY IS LOCATED. THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS DELEGATE IN LUANDA WAS IN TOUCH WITH NETO AND I REPORT HIS COMMENTS AT THE END OF THIS TELEGRAM. WHATEVER ELSE NETO'S STATEMENT MAY BE, IT IS AN ACCURATE PICTURE OF THE DISORGANIZATION, INCOMPETENCE AND CONFUSION IN THE FNLA.

2. IN HIS RADIO STATEMENT, NETO SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MILITARY AFFAIRS IN LUANDA, AFTER THE FNLA LEADERS ABANDONED THE CITY HE WAS LEFT ALONE AND DECIDED FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS TO AGREE TO THE EVACUATION OF FNLA TROOPS FROM THE SAO PEDRO DA BARRA FORTRESS AND THE SANEAMENTO NEIGHBORHOOD. FOR HIS PAINS, HE SAID, HE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM HOLDEN
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ROBERTO WHICH MADE HIM RESPONSIBLE BEFORE HISTORY

FOR THE ERROR HE HAD MADE. ISOLATED AS HE WAS IN LUANDA, HIY HOMETOWN, FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY BECAUSE OF HIS POLITICAL CONVICTIONS, THE LETTER FROM ROBERTO WAS THE LAST STRAW. AFTER RECEIVING ANOTHER LETTER FROM ROBERTO SAYING HIS PRESENCE IN LUANDA WAS NO LONGER NEEDED, HE THOUGHT DEEPLY ABOUT THINGS AND DECIDED ON HIS OWN UPON A COURSE OF ACTION. HE PREFERRED TO SIMULATE A KIDNAPPING AND REMAIN ISOLATED FOR A CERTAIN PERIOD TO LEAVING FOR CARMONA, WHERE HE HAS NO FAMILY OR FRIENDS AND FROM WHERE HE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO RETURN TO LUANDA TO SEE HIS FAMILY OR TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY.

3. AFTER MEDITATING LONG AND HARD ABOUT WHAT HE SHOULD DO, NETO CONTINUED, HE DECIDED TO BREAK ALL TIES WITH THE FNLA BECAUSE DESPITE HIS DEDICATION TO THE CAUSE PERSONS CLOSE TO ROBERTO TRIED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO KILL HIM. IN LUANDA HE WAS ACCUSED OF TREASON AND OF SPYING ON FNLA FOR MPLA. HE WAS CONSTANTLY IMPEDED IN HIS ABILITY TO FUNCTION AS A MINISTER BECAUSE OF CONSTANT INTERFERENCE IN HIS AFFAIRS BY THE FNLA AND THE LACK OF COORDINATION AND ABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS WITHIN THE PARTY. HIS RELATIONS WITH MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR N'GOLA KABANGU WERE NOT AT ALL GOOD. NETO DESCRIBES AT LENGTH THE PROBLEMS SURROUNDING HIS PARTICIPATION IN AN INTERNATIONAL COFFEE COUNCIL MEETING IN LONDON. HE RETURNED TO FIND THE CITY IN FLAMES AND THE FNLA MILITARY COMMANDERS SPENDING THEIR TIME IN N'GOLA KABANGU'S HOUSE. HE ASKED WHY THEY WERE THERE WHEN THE FNLA SOLDIERS WERE FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVES. KABANGU HAD NO ANSWER. FNLA SOLDIERS CAME IN FROM ALL SIDES AND NETO COULD SEE THEY HAD NO ABILITY TO FIGHT WITHOUT THEIR COMMANDERS. IT WAS DURING THIS PERIOD THAT NETO LEARNED FOR THE FIRST TIME OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN KABANGU AND JOHNNY EDUARDO. HE FINALLY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE FNLA PROBLEM WAS NOT ONE OF DISORGANIZATION BUT OF CONFUSION. NOTHING WAS EVER DECIDED, OR DETERMINED; EVERYTHING WAS DISILLUSION, DISAPPOINTMENT. AND BENEATH IT ALL, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DO ANYTHING, ESPECIALLY IN THOSE DIFFICULT MOMENTS.

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COMMANDERS AND OTHERS LEFT TO SEEK INSTRUCTIONS FROM HOLDEN ROBERTO. NONE OF THEM EVER RETURNED AND HE FINALLY WAS ALONE WITH COMMANDER BARREIROS AND A FEW OTHERS AND HAD TO MAKE SOME VITALLY IMPORTANT DECISIONS DURING THE LAST DAYS OF FNLA IN LUANDA.

4. AFTER A LENGTHY DEFENSE OF HIS DECISION TO REMAIN IN LUANDA NETO SAID, IN EFFECT, THAT HE FEARED

ASSASSINATION IF HE WENT TO CARMONA. HE THEN DEFENDED HIS ACTIVITIES AS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. AT THE END, HE ACCUSED FNLA OF TODAY BEING AT THE SERVICE OF IMPERIALISTS, RACISTS AND ENEMIES OF THE INTERESTS OF ANGOLA. ZAIRE CANNOT LIBERATE ANGOLA OR FORCE THE ANGOLAN PEOPLE INTO A REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS; MUCH LESS CAN SOUTH AFRICA DO SO. SUCH ALLIANCES ARE DESTRUCTIVE.

5. AFTER COMING ONCE AGAIN INTO PUBLIC VIEW, NETO ASKED TO SEE THE DELEGATE OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, WHO WENT TO VISIT HIM AT THE HOME OF HIS PARENTS. NETO ALSO CALLED AT THE RED CROSS HEADQUARTERS. THE RED CROSS COULD NOT OFFER FORMAL PROTECTION BECAUSE THE MPLA WOULD NOT ACCEDE TO SUCH AN ACTION, BUT IT DID HELP ARRANGE HIS TRAVEL OUT OF THE COUNTRY. THE DELEGATE HERE TOLD ME ON AUGUST 26 THAT NETO HAS SAID HIS STATEMENT WAS FORCED UPON HIM, THAT HE REALLY WAS KIDNAPPED AND THAT A GREAT DEAL HAD TO DO WITH HIS PARENTS. HIS FATHER IS FROM LUANDA, HE WAS BORN ON THE ISLAND ACROSS THE BAY FROM THE CITY AND IS AN INFLUENTIAL LEADER AMONG LUANDA'S DOCK WORKERS. IF HE HAD NOT MADE THE STATEMENT, HE CLAIMED, CERTAIN EVIL THINGS WOULD HAVE BEFALLEN HIM OR HIS PARENTS. ACCORDING TO THE DELEGATE, NETO WAS NOT BEATEN OR OTHERWISE HARMED PHYSICALLY, BUT HE CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN DRUGGED.

6. I HAVE MY DOUBTS ABOUT THE FORCED NATURE OF THE STATEMENT. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE FACTS ARE, BUT I KNOW NETO AND HIS WORDS SOUND SO MUCH LIKE HIM AND WHAT HE SAYS ABOUT THE FNLA AND THE PEOPLE IN IT RING SO TRUE THAT IT IS HARD FOR ME TO ACCEPT HIS STORY ABOUT COERCION. THE ENTIRE EPISODE HAS
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BEEN BIZARRE AND I SUSPECT THERE WILL BE ANOTHER CHAPTER. MEANWHILE, NETO IS FORTUNATE THAT HIS PRIVATE PENSION PLAN WILL ALLOW HIM TO TAKE EARLY RETIREMENT IN EUROPE.
KILLORAN

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